

ARM Prison Outreach International

"Ministers' Minute" Volume V Number 4

BAD NEWS? YES, BUT DON'T GIVE UP! THERE'S GOOD NEWS! - - Part 2

2 CORINTHIANS 4:16-18

This "Ministers' Minute" is the 4th email of 2006 in a series of messages that ARM is sending as an encouragement to preachers and Christian workers around the world. This is the second of two-part message -- if you missed or misplaced part one, you may find it at the archive url below. I prepared this message hoping that it will encourage those in Christ Jesus to focus on the "unseen" evidence that the best is yet to come! It is my prayer that this message will encourage you and those you teach.

May God bless your labors! -- Rod Farthing, Development Director

ARM FAST FACTS: RECENT ARM BAPTISTRY DONATION REPORT

ARM sent 4 prison baptistries in February 2006

2 Communion Table Baptistries were sent to:

Little Sandy Correctional Complex -- Sandy Hook, KY 41171
California Men's Colony-West -- San Luis Obispo, CA 93409

2 Portable Collapsible Baptistries were sent to:

SW VA Regional Jail Authority at Haysi -- Haysi, VA 24256
Houston County Sheriff's Dept. Crockett, TX 75835

ARM sent 2 mission baptistries to:

Church Village Church of Christ -- Kenroy Clark
Guyana, So. America

ARM donated 82 Baptistries in 2005!

There have been 1,219 baptistries donated to prisons in ARM's 32+ years of ministry! In addition, hundreds have been shipped to military bases and mission fields!

BAD NEWS? YES, BUT DON'T GIVE UP! THERE'S GOOD NEWS! -- Part 2

2 CORINTHIANS 4:16-18

3. BAD NEWS: VISIBLE DISCOURAGES/ GOOD NEWS: INVISIBLE ENCOURAGES! 18

2 Cor 4:18 So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. (NIV)

Look right at [some spot in the church bldg that is inspiring] -- what does it cause you think of? Now look at the back of someone's head Now close your eyes and think of the cutest little baby you've ever seen ... Your focus makes a big difference!

TWO MEN LOOKED OUT OF PRISON BARS... ONE SAW MUD, THE OTHER... STARS!!!

Do you remember the story of Elisha and Gehazi and the invisible army?

II Ki 6:14-17 Then the king sent horses and chariots and a strong force there. They went by night and surrounded the city. When the servant of the man of God got up and went out early the next morning, an army with horses and chariots had surrounded the city. "Oh, my lord, what shall we do?" the servant asked. "Don't be afraid," the prophet answered. "Those who are with us are more than those who are with them." And Elisha prayed, "O LORD, open his eyes so he may see." Then the LORD opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. (NIV)

Where we fix our attention makes a lot of difference in how we feel, the degree of our courage, and the hope (or lack thereof) with which we face our future.

When we look at the *visible*, we are discouraged. I know – I looked in the mirror this a.m. So Paul recommends looking at the *invisible* instead. Contradiction of terms? Look at the invisible? He means, of course, to focus on the intangibles. Faith, hope, and love to name the big three. We look to God, not mammon. To zero in on heaven, not this temporary earth.

Heb 12:1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

2 Let us **fix our eyes** on Jesus, the Author and Perfector of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (NIV)

Paul said in 2 Cor 5:7 we should walk by faith not sight. That is why I said, picture in your mind the cutest baby you ever saw. We can control our focus; our imagination cannot be imprisoned. We choose our focus. Paul says, look at the invisible.

The bad news is that everything you can see with the human eye is decaying, rusting, getting flabbier, or deteriorating somehow.

My face in the mirror

Isn't wrinkled or drawn.

My house isn't dirty,

The cobwebs are gone.

My garden looks lovely

And so does my lawn.

I think I might never

Put my glasses back on!

The good news is this: What can't be seen with the human eye is more real, durable, and dependable than the visible.

What can you see with your physical eyes? Houses ... Cars ... Trees ... The sky ... Your loved ones' faces. Did you remember these are all, in themselves, discouraging? The house will grow old, eventually decay. So will the car. So will the tree. So will the faces of your loved ones. But the faces of your loved ones remind you

of the potential of that person to live forever... It is called the human soul that lives behind that face. That window that you looked at earlier will itself decay. But since it reminds you of the eternal and indestructible Savior, it brings hope and encouragement.

So it is with these invisible things that bring encouragement ... Even when unseen, even when buried out of view for centuries, the power will eventually be seen.... Consider the story of the boy and his mother's embroidery.

GOD'S EMBROIDERY (author unknown) When I was a little boy, my mother used to embroider a great deal. I would sit at her knee and look up from the floor and ask what she was doing. She informed me that she was embroidering. I told her that it looked like a mess from where I was. As from the underside I watched her work within the boundaries of the little round hoop that she held in her hand, I complained to her that it sure looked messy from where I sat. She would smile at me, look down and gently say, "My son, you go about your playing for awhile, and when I am finished with my embroidering, I will put you on my knee and let you see it from my side."

I would wonder why she was using some dark threads along with the bright ones and why they seemed so jumbled from my View. A few minutes would pass and then I would hear Mother's voice say, "Son, come and sit on my knee." This I did only to be surprised and thrilled to see a beautiful flower or a sunset. I could not believe it, because from underneath it looked so messy. Then Mother would say to me, "My son, from underneath it did look messy and jumbled, but you did not realize that there was a pre-drawn plan on the top. It was a design. I was only following it. Now look at it from my side and you will see what I was doing."

Many times through the years I have looked up to my Heavenly Father and said, "Father, what are You doing?" He has answered, "I am embroidering your life." I say, "But it looks like a mess to me. It seems so jumbled. The threads seem so dark." The Father seems to tell me, "My child, you go about your business of doing My business, and one day I will bring you to Heaven and put you on My knee and you will see the plan from My side."

ARM FAST FACTS: NEW RAPHA HOUSE IN USE!

All the girls moved to the new building on 18th March 2006. They are very happy and all staff are working very hard for the moving and relocation of the things and materials to the place that is need to be. Bro. Garman and his wife Linda are on their way to Cambodia for the dedication on April 8. There were 3 girls accept to stay at Rapha House during the period from 23rd February to 23rd March 2006, 2 of them are trafficked girls sent from Thailand. All Children in center receive hygiene materials once every month; this month they also got new training on how to keep the center nice and clean and how to use new equipment in the new building. **There are 32 girls as of 23rd March 2006.**

4. BAD NEWS: THE SEEN IS TEMPORARY... GOOD NEWS: THE UNSEEN IS ETERNAL!! 18B

- Out of sight is out of mind... Too often true. And our tendency to forget about what we can't see causes us to remember what ought to be forgotten and forget what needs to be remembered.
- But a part of Christian maturity is focusing on the reality that this world—with its lusts and its treasures and its sorrows and its cheap thrills -- is passing away. And what is coming is the eternal, unshakable kingdom of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.
- If you can see it, it won't last. This was a comfort to the first century Christians yet is considered as bad news by 20th century Christians. Why the difference? How was it a comfort to the first century Christians?

Their lives were filled with persecution, hostile soldiers, and endless physical disappointments. To learn that this would all pass was good news. We look at our houses and cars and lands and goods amassed. And we aren't comforted by the truth that what we see won't last. We too often have our roots too deep in this earth. We have forgotten that this world is not our home, for we are just passing thru... Our real treasures are invisible... Laid up somewhere beyond the blue. We can remain steadfast – for we have a great hope!

Most of our disappointments here are due to a wrong perspective, a wrong focus. We just have mistakenly chosen to look out the wrong window....

Young widow was at the home of her elderly father with her 8-year-old son. Her husband of only ten years had been buried on the hill near the home 2 weeks ago. She was still reeling from the blow, of course, and stared despondently at her husband's grave just outside the west window. As she sobbed in her grief, her father approached lovingly and gently placed his hand on her shoulder. "I know it hurts, my dear" said he, "But God will see you through." "I believe He will" said she, "But it looks so grim right now." Her father looked out the south window and saw the little boy playing joyfully with his little dog. He pointed her toward that south window and she smiled thru her tears, then actually laughed out loud. "Sometimes," said the wise father, "we just have to make ourselves LOOK OUT A DIFFERENT WINDOW!" Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in His wonderful face, and the pains of earth"

"Remain faithful unto death .." Rev. 2:10B

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Check out our web sites: www.arm.org www.abarc.org www.raphahouse.org

In 2005, 127 ABA Bible courses was mailed from ARM every day!
In 2005, an ABA Bible course was mailed from ARM to a prisoner EVERY 11.3 minutes!